

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

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MARKEY ANNOUNCES \$62 MILLION IN HOMELAND SECURITY GRANTS FOR MASSACHUSETTS

Washington, D.C.: Representative Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, today announced that the Department of Homeland Security has awarded \$62 million to Massachusetts to increase the Commonwealth's ability to prevent, respond to and recover from terrorist attacks.

"I am pleased that the Department of Homeland Security has recognized our State's important security needs by providing \$62 million in grant funding," Rep. Markey said. "The LNG terminal in Everett, cargo entering the Port of Boston, and other critical infrastructure require significant federal security funds to ensure that they are adequately protected from potential terrorist strikes. While this federal funding is good news for Massachusetts, the Bush Administration continues to nickel and dime our first responders while writing a blank check for the war in Iraq. President Bush's budget slashes funding for first responders by \$420 million – a 10.5% cut compared to current funding," Rep. Markey said.

This grant funding provides funding for the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) -- the only federal program that helps police officers, fire fighters, medical personnel and other emergency responders develop integrated, coordinated plans to minimize casualties in the event of a terrorist attack that uses a weapon of mass destruction. Bush's budget request for next year once again completely eliminates funding for this critical program.

"We must ensure that our first responders have the equipment they need to perform their difficult jobs and our ports, bridges and other critical infrastructure are sufficiently protected. Today's grant funding is a step in the right direction, but President Bush's budget request for next year leaves open dangerous security loopholes. It does not mandate that all cargo carried on passenger planes be physically screened or require security upgrades for shipments of hazardous materials, nuclear reactors or chemical facilities. I will continue to work to close dangerous homeland security gaps so that our communities receive the homeland security support that they need," Rep. Markey concluded.